

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

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30. (Currently Amended) A set top box integrated with, or communicating with, a television, the set top box comprising memory storing instructions for:

receiving broadcasted content from a service provider via a first input;

sending the broadcasted content to the television via a first output;

receiving message information from a user via a second input;

~~conducting two-way communications with other devices communicating via a back channel communications path at that is connected between a second output of the set top box and an input of a second set top box, the back channel communications path using an in-home wiring system that is different from the first input, the second output sending the message information to the second set top box, thus establishing a two-way intercom system with the second set top box;~~

~~retrieving a visual representation from the memory that corresponds to a sender of a communication;~~

~~processing a callout bubble that places text of the communication within the callout bubble; and~~

~~processing for display the visual representation of the sender and the callout bubble comprising the text of the sender's communication,~~

~~reducing a displayed image to a first quadrant of a display of the television, such that second, third, and fourth quadrants are blank;~~

~~displaying a first message in two horizontal, adjacent blank quadrants; and~~

~~displaying a second message in a remaining blank quadrant;~~

~~updating the message information using private data received from the external line connection to the external signal source; and~~

~~when a message is created, first storing the message in memory for a time prior to being sent, then retrieving the message from the memory and sending the message to a recipient's set top box,~~

wherein the broadcasted content is processed for an audio channel and, when the communication message information has audible content, the communication message information is processed for another audio channel and a volume of the broadcasted content is reduced below a volume of the communication message information being played.

31. (Previously Presented) A set top box according to claim 30, wherein the memory stores instructions for receiving signals from a keyboard input.
32. (New) A method, comprising:

- receiving broadcasted content from a service provider via a first input;
- processing the broadcasted content by a processor for display via a first output;
- receiving message information from a user via a second input;
- conducting two-way communications with other devices via a back channel communications path at an input-output port;
- receiving a communication at the input-output port;
- retrieving a visual representation from memory that corresponds to a sender of the communication;
- retrieving a callout bubble from the memory when the communication comprises text;
- placing the text within the callout bubble; and
- processing for display the visual representation of the sender and the callout bubble comprising the text of the sender's communication.